WAVE

Number 180 **“the ship comes first”** **March 2023**

The Newsletter of the Barque ‘*Polly Woodside*’ Volunteers Association Inc.

James Craig in Williamstown - February 2020

Wouldn’t it be nice if Polly looked like this? Again!!!!

Photo by Neil Thomas

Contents:-

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Chairman's Annual Report for 2022:

Our Tuesday Gang of volunteers consist of Richard Barber, Mike Ridley, Mark Thomas between jobs, Wayne Bette when he is free, and me.

Roger Wilson is on sick leave, after his hip replacement operation. However he did pay us a visit in November, inspected the ship, and is keen to return in the near future. We are really looking forward to it as the list is fast growing for him.

Our Bosun, Jeff has a day with us, whenever his ship comes in, and it's great to have him back with his maritime knowledge and ability to move heavy objects we can't.

The Port Poop-deck steps have been repaired and replaced as well as the Starboard steps side boards by Mark and me.

Roger and Mike were working on the restoration of the scrim-work on the fo'c'sle step rails, and Mike completed it when Roger had his operation. The mudlark, after making a nest on the starboard anchor, resented his presence and challenged by dive-bombing him.

The woodwork on the Poop-deck is being cleaned and oiled, and will look great on completion. Mark and me.

The top lid of the Break of Poop Companion-way was removed, restored and refitted by Mark.

The fife-rail around the mainmast is also being cleaned and oiled, and the fresh water pump has been reinstalled on it. Mark, Richard and me.

Richard is restoring the new gaff back to its readiness to be fitted back on the Mizzen, and on completion it is to be placed in safe keeping in the auditorium – all wrapped up ready to go – only needs sufficient volunteers to carry it into there.

Thanks to Kathleen, we received a new vacuum cleaner and a high-pressure water cleaner, along with a hose of sufficient length to reach from the jetty to the ship, and as a result Mark, Richard, and I cleaned the deck and inner bulwarks, which made the ship look much neater.

Jacquie Watts of the MMHV (Melbourne Maritime Heritage Assoc. of Victoria) organised a meeting between the Nat Trust and members of the MMHV, of which we are members also, to discuss Polly Woodside and her future. This meeting had to be postponed and rescheduled to a later date. Since then two meetings have been held with promising results (??). However, unfortunately the P.W.V.A. was not invited.

However the Nat Trust commissioned BMT to carry out a 'Polly Woodside Condition Survey', as well as to present a 'Polly Woodside Maintenance Plan' in April 2022. On completion of discussions with the Nat Trust we will report on the results at the AGM.

Could it be that Polly Woodside is to be resurrected to her full glory in the Future?

Manager – Kathleen Toohey - Site Report for 2022.

My apologies for not being able to attend today's meeting, but I would like to provide you with an update of things that the National Trust have done over the last 12 months, and what is currently being worked on.

Completed tasks include the following;

- Pest Control, Fire Safety Inspections, Water Cooler Servicing, Air Con Servicing, Sanitation Servicing, Alarm Servicing, First Aid Kits, Radios Service & Exhaust System Checks all serviced regularly and up to date
- Faulty Fire Alarm and Panic Button fixed
- Security increased to nightly patrols
- Kitchen detail cleaned
- Fire Hose on ship replaced and leaking pipe on ship fixed
- Test and Tag and an Electrical Upgrade, including replacing broken fixtures, tidying and making safe cords
- The wharf Deck Steps were replaced after the timber had rotted through
- The Tree and Garden Area have been pruned and maintained
- Had a skip day, were a lot of rubbish was discarded and the outdoor area cleaned up a lot, also pressure washed the front of the shed
- A new collection item was acquired – lamps supposedly from when she was Rona
- Collection Cleaning training provided to Volunteers and staff
- Marketing Photoshoot for advertising and social media
- New front window signage
- City of Melbourne Volunteers (red coats) out for a famil so they can help direct people to visit.
- Acknowledgement of Country added to tours
- Hosted a National Trust Board Meeting, Branches Forum and the Rippon Lea/Como/Labassa Volunteer Christmas Party
- Acrylic barriers replaced in Aft Accommodation and cabins redressed after break in
- Anodes replaced and installed

Currently Maddy and I are working on the following;

- Man Overboard Procedures being updated and training provided
- Deck cabin roof canvas replacement
- Getting QR Audio Codes for the ship

That's a lot of stuff right?! Not including the amazing work the volunteer team has done.

We have been very busy trying to get the whole site back to a safe standard for staff and volunteers to work in and creating programs that are cost efficient but still bring in the people, so far we are doing ok!

I would also like to express that as an organisation, we attended 2 x Volunteer Expos at Universities and from that held an open day at Polly where 2 people came, 1 expressed interest, we are just waiting on paperwork.
Getting more volunteers is a priority however it is a struggle in general, but we are trying.

Our next step for volunteers is to reach out to old partners like NAB and see if they are interested in restarting their programs, however the programs will look different to before to suit our situation.

Started our second Open Day – Pirate Day on the 3rd Sunday of each month. First one was in December. We created a new simplified program that allowed us to increase possible visitation while also reducing staff costs. We saw 250 people at the last one and am hoping to steadily increase that as well.

Lastly, BMT performed a Ship Survey and provided a suggested Maintenance Schedule.
I have provided this to Neil and Jeff and spoken to some of the volunteers about it. I have made a new schedule to include the Collection, Gardens and site as a whole. Also proved to Neil.

There is no expectation here to have this all done. There is also no expectation that this is all completed by volunteers. This is a list for staff to also provide assistance on and I can bring in some more help as needed.
At the end of the year, being able to visually see what we could and could not achieve, really helps me to determine where more help is needed and sourcing that help appropriately.
This will be such a great tool for us to properly maintain the site.

The survey also states that the ship is sufficient as a floating museum and in no danger of further disrepair. We realise we still have a lot of work to do but rest assured we are working on it and doing the best we can.

There were some questions regarding the Volunteer Story part of the Museum. Unfortunately I don't have dates for this or any real update to provide you, but I can tell you it is definitely still going ahead and will be installed at some stage.
The research has been completed, but the story itself and its design is still to come and does take time. I would certainly prefer it was done correctly to properly honour the volunteers rather than slapped together.

I think that's about it really. If there are any questions about anything please leave them with Neil and I can answer them.

Thank you, -

Kathleen

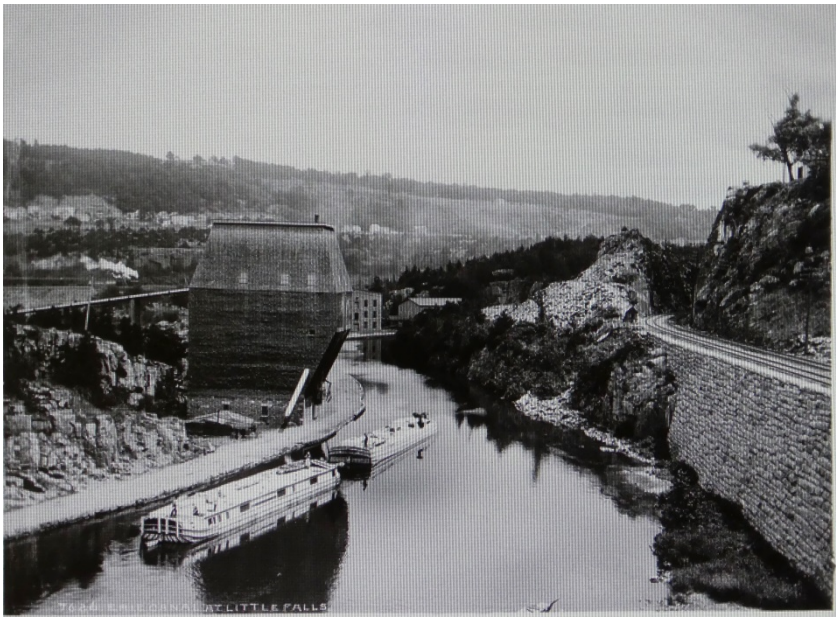
A Brief History of the Erie Canal

The waterway opened up the heartland to trade, transforming small hamlets into industrial centres

A boat makes a morning trip through the Erie Canal in Rochester, New York, October 2021. Johnny Milano

Former President Thomas Jefferson considered the proposal "little short of madness." The project became known as "Clinton's Folly"—an embarrassment to the state of New York and its governor, DeWitt Clinton. Yet shortly after the locks opened in 1825, completing a man-made waterway that connected the Hudson River to the Great Lakes, the critics were silenced, and the Erie Canal, one of the greatest engineering marvels in history, charted America's course from colonial start-up to global superpower.

Around 1807, commercial interests in New York State started agitating for a canal to link the Midwest and the Eastern Seaboard. A transportation corridor to the Great Lakes would open the nation's interior to global trade and promote the development of an American heartland. Raw materials would come east; people would move west. In Clinton's hopeful words at the canal's opening ceremony: "The most fertile and extensive regions of America will avail themselves of its facilities for a market … [and New York City] will, in the course of time, become the granary of the world, the emporium of commerce, the seat of manufactures, the focus of great moneyed operations."



In Little Falls, New York (pictured c. 1890),the locks lifted boats more than 40 feet at the canal's most difficult impasse.(Library of Congress

Easier said than done. America had few civil engineers. Equipment was crude. William Otis wouldn't patent his industrial steam shovel until 1839, and Alfred Nobel's dynamite wouldn't appear until 1866. Muscle would build the canal. Construction began in 1817, and soon Benjamin Wright, a prominent surveyor, became chief engineer. Clinton's doubters were correct that the engineering challenges were unprecedented. Wright's roughly 9,000 laborers channeled nobly through impossible rock formations. Sometimes they'd crack the stone with gunpowder, a volatile and deadly option; other times, they would use a drill bit invented for the task. To dig the canal trench—4 feet deep, 40 feet wide, running 363 miles from Albany to Buffalo—the men used picks and shovels. There were intense risks: Malaria, mysterious illnesses and grisly construction accidents disabled hundreds of workers, killing many.

Some workers found the territory irredeemably harsh: "The land is a desolate wilderness," William Thomas, a Welshman who had come to work on the canal in 1818, wrote to his family back home. "I beg all of my old neighbors not to think of coming here."

The greatest challenge was elevation: Lake Erie, the canal's western terminus, is more than 570 feet above sea level. The Hudson River at Waterford, New York, the eastern terminus, is a mere 16.5 feet in elevation. Given rises and dips along the way, the engineers knew the canal couldn't be a continuous river. It would have to be arranged in a series of waterways, each occupying its own elevation, with those strips connected by locks—great concrete bathtubs, designs for which Wright and other engineers copied from the finest English and French canal builders of the day: A boat floats in, the doors close, and piped water flows into or out of the sealed chamber, raising or lowering the water level so the vessel can float on to the next stretch. Once complete, it would be one of the longest canals in the world.

After the canal opened, in October 1825, economic gains were swift and helped transform New York City (roughly 150 miles down the Hudson from Waterford) into the nation's premier seaport, surpassing Philadelphia and Boston. The canal corridor also served as an important route on the Underground Railroad: Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass lived nearby, providing refuge to those in flight. The canal wasn't just an engineering feat; it was a community linked by water, and by the belief in a better tomorrow. The 1912 song "Low Bridge, Everybody Down," perhaps better known as "Fifteen Miles on the Erie Canal," offered the country a nostalgic vision of plucky life on the barges and a celebration of the booming canal cities that helped turn New York into the Empire State.

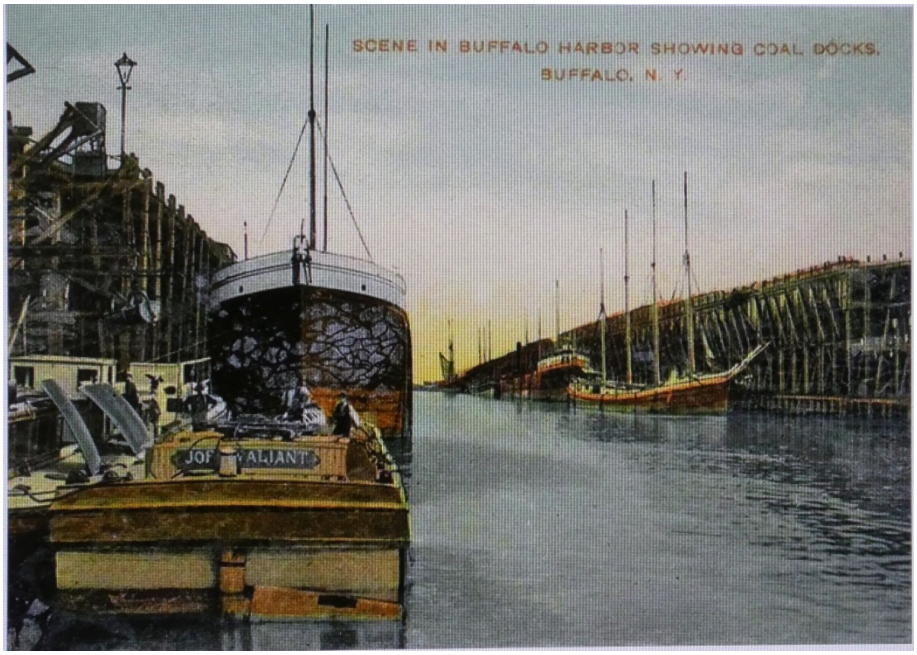
But perhaps the greatest marvel today is that the canal is still in vibrant use, its machinery largely remaining in continuous operation. While freight rail and the St. Lawrence Seaway have made the canal's commercial traffic mostly obsolete, despite the occasional tugboat pulling a barge, it is frequently traversed by anglers o Great Loopers—recreational boaters who circumnavigate the Eastern Seaboard via the Erie Canal, the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River, the Gulf of Mexico and back up along the Atlantic. "A lot of people look at [the canal] as history," says Paul Guarnieri, chief lock operator at Waterford E-2. "But we're still here." The canal remains a playground and a testament to American engineering—at once a call to adventure and a gentle edict to slow down and unplug: "Life in the slow lane" is the canaller's motto today; along several stretches, the motorized speed limit is a mere five miles per hour.

What do we do with glorious things that have outlived their original intent? When we're wise, we preserve them. When we're brilliant, we preserve and *repurpose* them. As you watch these spirited modern-day canallers making these waters their own, the venerable canal still seems to embody hope for the future.

Boom Time

How the Erie Canal transformed quiet rural villages into thriving commercial cities

Buffalo



(New York Heritage Digital Collections) The village had been burned to the ground by British troops in 1813, and when canal construction began four years later, Buffalo was still a remote outpost deep in the Niagara Frontier, home to no more than 2,000 people. By 1900, canal commerce had helped make it the ninth-largest city in America, the world's largest grain port and a hub for American flour-milling.

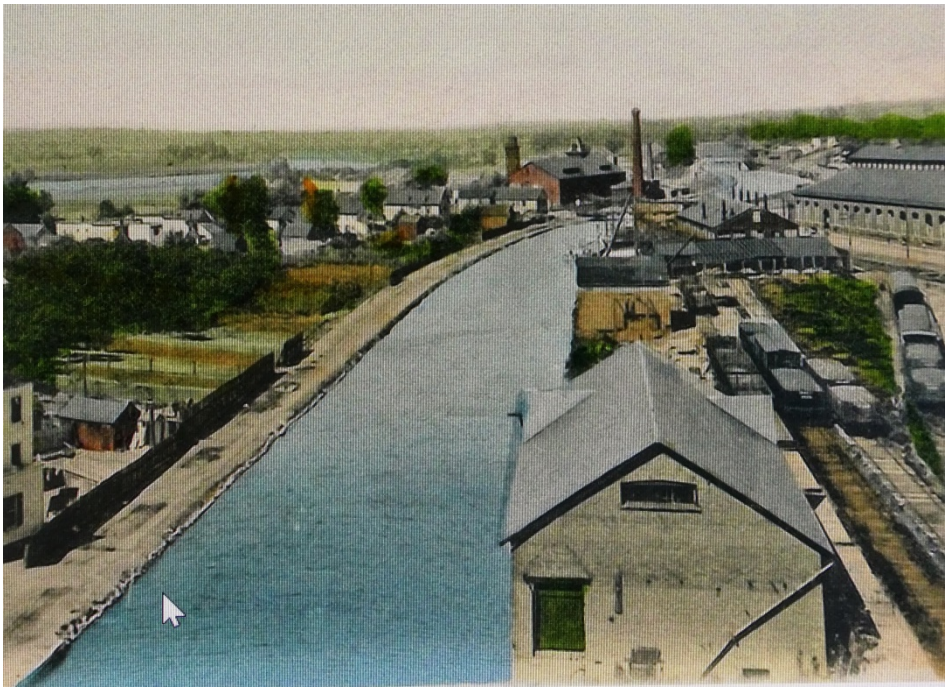
Rochester

(New York Heritage Digital Collections) Before the canal, Rochester had about 1,000 residents. Fifty years later, there were more than 80,000, thanks to increasing flour exports. Perched beside falls offering hydropower, Rochester soon became the nation's largest flour producer until Minneapolis took the title in the 1880s. Home to one of the nation's first commercial plant nurseries, the Flour City then became the Flower City—a leading exporter of flower seeds into the 20th century.

Syracuse

(Library of Congress) An unincorporated, swampy crossroads, Syracuse had 250 residents at most. Then the canal came through, and the town started massively increasing its salt exports by digging deeper into the surrounding briny wetlands. Within a decade, the city's population was 10,000, and Syracuse would dominate the nation's salt market until the 1870s. By the end of the 19th century, its population was up to 100,000.

Schenectady



(Library of Congress) When Clinton's inaugural flotilla reached Schenectady, population 4,068, the townspeople protested the canal, which they feared would diminish Schenectady's role in overland trade. By 1880, the population had only grown to 13,655. But Thomas Edison, tired of labor strikes at his factory in Manhattan, was looking for new digs. Schenectady, right on the canal, was perfect, and Edison moved his operations there in 1886, helping raise the population to nearly 100,000 by 1929.